



Senate Bill 2225 Testimony: In Favor – DO PASS
January 27, 2025 | 2 pm | Senate Appropriations – Government Operations Division

Chairman Wanzek and Committee Members,

My name is Lindsey Harriman, and I am the Community Engagement Coordinator for Williams County. I am a member of the Vision West ND Housing Committee, which has been cultivating resources for building affordable housing. Additionally, one of our County Commissioners, Steve Kemp, was a member of former Governor Burgum's North Dakota Housing Initiative Advisory Committee and we were both participants in the Initiative's Housing Round Table Discussion in Williston last summer.

I am writing today **in favor of SB 2225**, with a **request to re-consider** the details of the match requirement. This bill addresses a critical element for increasing the inventory of much needed affordable housing through infrastructure funding. We appreciate that the bill is constructed in a way that leverages local entities to determine the pressing housing needs and cooperatively create solutions.

Williams County, and its communities, have been on a housing rollercoaster since the onset of the most recent oil boom in the early 2010s. In response to the boom, builders flocked to the area to quickly put up housing, including workforce housing. As the oil and gas industry fluctuated, some housing units remained unoccupied for a few years, but in 2025, we are now at a point again where rental units are exceeding 90% occupancy and there is a very limited inventory of single-family homes, let alone any type of housing that can be considered "affordable." Over the next decade, we expect our population to continue to grow at a strong rate as the energy industry continues to innovate and new industrial projects, such as the Cerilon gas-to-liquids plant and the Basin Electric natural gas power generation station, come online.

The common theme in our local housing discussions is the need for not only new infrastructure, but also for upgraded or improved infrastructure to support the current population. Williams County has been working to do our part, through funding for improvements to not just our county roads but also providing supplemental funding to townships for their road improvements and to the Northwest Rural Water District for a new water line. However, funding-intensive needs continue to exist, such as for new water lines, upgraded water lines, new and improved rural sewer systems, and roads for community access – all to support the increase in affordable housing inventory.

We understand that a match requirement is essential for a grant program such as this, but we ask that you re-consider the proportion requirements that are stated in the bill: *"The matching funds **must be derived equally** from funds provided by a political subdivision, funds provided from local developers, and private funds from within the community applying for grant funding. The private funds from within the community may be from a local development corporation, donations, or in-kind contributions."* In the true spirit of enabling local political subdivisions and communities to decide on the type of housing that is needed and ensuring that these funds can be leveraged to meet the goal of increasing housing inventory as soon as possible, **kindly consider a match with a simple proportion of state to non-state funds (match), which would allow for maximum project success and flexibility.**

Williams County encourages a **DO PASS for SB 2225**. Thank you for your consideration of this important piece of legislation that aims to invest in infrastructure for much-needed affordable housing.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Harriman
Williams County Community Engagement Coordinator

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